

COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

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Snapshot taken on my 82nd birthday

June 4th 1946

John M. Richardson.

Sequential page 900

BP-2

BETWEEN THE PAGES

John M. Richardson

Snapshot Taken on my 82nd Birthday
June 4th 1946

I do not recall, today, whether it was early or late December of 1982 that I received a telephone call from Richard Picker. Dick sounded very rushed, not his usual self at all, and his message was cryptic "Jim, I am sending you a box of stuff that I have had for awhile and that I want you to have. The plates were too large for the box so I cut them in half but I did not damage any of the photographs. I am not going to have time to do anything with this material so I want you to have it for CNL -- I hope there is something there that you can use." And with that, Dick said goodbye and hung up the telephone.

Dick's "box of stuff" arrived at CNL P.O. Box 4411 on January 3, 1983, the date is still bright and clear on the pink post office claim check form pasted on the side. It was smaller than I had anticipated, about 9" x 12" and about 4" thick. When I reached home I took it into the CNL "office", a converted upstairs bedroom, and set it on top of a rather depressingly large pile of unopened correspondence, catalogs and advertising brochures that had accumulated over the holidays. "I had better get that file-pile cleaned up this weekend" I thought to myself -- but several weekends went by before I found time to accomplish that task, and the pile grew a bit larger in the meantime. One item added to the top was the February 16, 1983 issue of Coin World.

Late one Sunday evening I sorted out the file-pile and opened Dick's box. It was indeed a "box of stuff" exactly as Dick had characterized it. Old correspondence, many sheets of handwritten working notes, numerous envelopes of photographic negatives and prints of coins, mostly Connecticut coppers plus a few Fugio cents, a Bolender auction sale catalog of November 28, 1939 annotated on the front "priced catalog, see pages 50-51 for Conn. cents", half a dozen or so sets of photostats of documents from the manuscript archives of the Connecticut State Library, plus a number of galley proofs of a very nicely printed plate illustrating 24 different obverses and reverses of Connecticut coppers.

Buried under all of this assorted material were the "plates that were too large for the box." Dick had carefully cut in half fifteen light pasteboard sheets which had been laid out with pencil lines into a format of six horizontal rows each containing four 1:1 glossy

photographs of Connecticut coppers. He had carefully numbered each sheet in red ink at the lower two corners so that the two parts could be properly reassembled after cutting. Of the twenty four spaces for photographs on each sheet, however, less than half contained photographs in place. It was clearly evident that someone had been in the process of compiling a complete set of photographs of the Connecticut coppers for publication. As constructed, seventeen plates would have been necessary to illustrate all of the die varieties, but there were only fifteen plates -- the final two plates in the series were missing.

Mixed in with these Connecticut plates was a single photograph that seemed entirely out of place among the coinage prints. It was a small faded and yellowed photograph, folded and broken across the center, of an elderly gentleman. On the backside had been typed "Snapshot taken on my 82nd birthday ... June 4th 1946" with the signature John M. Richardson. We have reconstructed this photograph, cropped and considerably enlarged the central figure and reproduced it, together with the reverse annotation, as the frontispiece of this issue. John M. Richardson, as we all know, is best remembered for his work "The Copper Coins of Vermont" published in The Numismatist Volume LX, May 1947, which includes an introduction by Howard H. Kurth of Schenectady, New York. Included in the correspondence files in Dick's "box of stuff" were a number of handwritten letters from Howard Kurth addressed to Norman Bryant of North Haven, Connecticut.

Also included in the correspondence file were several letters from Norman Bryant addressed to various individuals of the American Numismatic Society (ANS), among them Sawyer McA. Mosser and Sidney P. Noe. One of these letters dated March 13, 1953 outlines a proposal to ANS to publish an updated version of Henry C. Miller's classic work The State Coinage of Connecticut ("Miller") which would include photographs of every die variety. By September 28, 1954 a letter to Bryant from Mosser indicated considerable progress including a trial plate of die varieties and specimen sheets run off from it by Meriden Gravure Co. This trial plate and several copies of the printed specimen sheets, on both white and buff paper, are among the items included in Dick's "box of stuff."

The name Norman Bryant appears on many of the envelopes of photographic prints and on many of the various notes and annotations throughout the materials in the box. A substantial number of the handwritten notes and annotations on materials contained therein are in Norman Bryant's distinctive handwriting. The identification of the contents of the box are inescapable -- it contains what was planned to have been a complete revision, with individual die variety photographs, of Henry C. Miller's The State Coinage of Connecticut to have been prepared by Norman Bryant and published by The American Numismatic Society. The only elements missing were the updated

descriptions and supporting text; there were, however, four typewritten pages of obverse descriptions for types 1 through 6 of the 1785 coinage, but that was all.

Evidently substantial progress had been made toward a revision of "Miller" but the task had never been completed. Many questions began to form -- why not? -- what happened? -- is there more of this material someplace? -- where did Dick obtain this stuff? -- why did he not take the time to tell me more about it? -- perhaps he did not know what these items really were. But, that certainly was not like Dick, but he had made the effort, at a time when he was in poor health, to pack up the "box of stuff" and mail it to me, so he certainly had some idea of its significance. My failure to promptly open the box, examine the contents and discuss them with Dick were oversights on my part that were inexcusable, but that was easy to explain -- the holidays had simply gotten in the way! At the least, I had kept moving the box to the top of the file-pile.

It was now very late on Sunday evening as I repacked the "box of stuff" with the thought that I would readily obtain the answers to my questions, and make my apologies, the next day. I picked up the copy of Coin World which, like the box, had been neglected and casually began thumbing through the pages. I reached page three and was stunned by the photograph and banner headline -- Numismatic scholar Richard Picker dies -- "... Tuesday Feb. 1 at Mount Sinai Hospital, New York. He was 67 ...Memorial services were held Feb. 4 ..."

During most of the next two years following Richard Picker's death the "box of stuff" remained closed. I had removed the photograph of John M. Richardson and placed it on my desk as a reminder that I should someday investigate the connection between that photograph and the other apparently unrelated materials in the box. Somewhere there were answers -- there must be a connection between Richardson and Bryant -- and I had a strong feeling that I already knew the answer -- someplace buried in an old correspondence file, perhaps -- but the pieces did not fit together.

Several years ago CNL Patron Edward R. Barnsley donated to The Colonial Newsletter Foundation a much worn copy of the ANS 1920 reprint of "The State Coinages of New England" that had belonged, at one time, to John M. Richardson. If ever there was a book literally worn out through long and devoted service, this is that book! On many pages the stain from repeated thumbing extends nearly to the center; some pages have almost disintegrated from years and years of constant use. It is extensively annotated; almost every line of type in the Connecticut section contains numerous notations. Many pages have pasted-in additions, photographs, rubbings, hand written notations regarding collectors and collections, one being an inventory of the Connecticut coppers collection of C. F. Luther, dated Nov. 1, 1929. On

the flyleaf is the following handwritten dedication "This long studied and much dilapidated book goes to my good friend and brother collector of Conn. cents Norman Bryant with my best wishes that he finds further additions." signed -- John M. Richardson -- May 6 1947.

On a hunch I compared the Vermont section of Richardson's copy of "State Coinages of New England" and his article "The Copper Coins of Vermont" published in The Numismatist . A number of charts and typewritten additions to the text are the same. Enough so to suggest that parts of the "New England" book were incorporated directly into Richardson's "Vermont" article. There are, however, almost no annotations in the Vermont section whereas the Connecticut section is extensively annotated. Evidently Richardson kept his detailed Vermont notes elsewhere.

Next I checked Richardson's Connecticut annotations with the four typewritten pages of obverse descriptions found in the "box of stuff". They are essentially identical! There can be little question that Norman Bryant had begun consolidating the Richardson Connecticut annotations into new descriptions for use in his update of "Miller".

At this point I expect that many of our readers have followed these comments with understanding, but others who may be recent devotees to the charms of Early American Numismatics are probably wondering "who was Norman Bryant?" In reply, Norman Bryant was an avid collector of Connecticut coppers (which he always referred to as "cents") who lived in North Haven, Connecticut. His interest in the Connecticut coppers led to extensive research into the history of the coining of these pieces in the New Haven area. An article "The New Haven Mint", one result of his research, was reprinted starting on Sequential Page 614 of CNL. Bryant had amassed by this time an outstanding collection of high grade Connecticut coppers, "... over 1000 specimens"; his objective being to acquire at least two exemplary specimens of each die variety combination to serve as a reference collection. Included in the Bryant collection was that of John M. Richardson which Bryant had purchased intact following the death of Richardson on June 9, 1948.

So why, with these outstanding resources at hand, did not Norman Bryant complete his work on the update of "Miller"? That he was making good progress on the project is evidenced in Dick Picker's "box of stuff". As it turns out, the question is answered by Bryant himself in a letter dated March 4, 1962 (about 10 years after the start of the project). "...This project I started a number of year's ago and spent quite a bit of money on photos before I got discouraged, because there was no assurance that the American Numismatic Society would go to the expense of publishing it after the individual had put a lot of money into the project. They wanted to see the finished product first before committing themselves."

In this same letter Norman Bryant indicates his knowledge of the location of the "Later Notes" of Dr. Thomas P. Hall at the Connecticut State Library in Hartford, Connecticut. (See CNL Sequential Pages 849-858). Bryant says "...the Library photostated the entire book for me and I had it bound." Here was yet another significant resource for use in his update of "Miller". Without any question we would have had today a significantly improved version of "Miller" had Norman Bryant not become discouraged over the personal monetary costs associated with his effort.

Norman Bryant was one of the original Patrons of The Colonial Newsletter. At the time of his death in the late 1960s (I am uncertain of the exact date) his Connecticut collection had grown to somewhere in the order of 1500 specimens. This outstanding collection was purchased intact in a private sale in 1970 and has been substantially dispersed since that time. Perhaps someone of our Patrons who is familiar with the details of this transaction would take the time to jot down his recollections of this really outstanding collection of Connecticut coppers which we could publish for our Patrons.

There is without doubt a great deal more to this story than has been uncovered through the cursory research first initiated by the discovery of the photograph of John M. Richardson tucked between the pages of Norman Bryant's Connecticut plates planned for use in his revision of "Miller". If any of our Patrons have any old correspondence files relating to this subject that they would care to donate to the CNL Technical Repository we will, of course, appreciate receiving them, either for permanent retention or duplication and return. That the details of this episode have come to light at all are due to Dick Picker's desire to enhance the cause of Early American Numismatics -- a trademark by which he will always be remembered.

As long as ye Editor can remember someone has been reported to have been working on a revision of "Miller". Several names have appeared over the years but nothing seems to have ever come of it. Norman Bryant perhaps made more actual progress toward that goal than anyone else. He started making plates, he had Richardson's annotated notebook as a guide as well as the notebook of Dr. Hall. But most importantly he had a splendid reference collection available for ready reference. What he did not have were the substantial financial resources required to support his effort. There is no question in the mind of ye Editor that the financial investment needed to produce a revision of "Miller", updated to include accurate new descriptions and a complete set of die variety photographs, would be almost overwhelming. The major factor would be the manhours necessary to pull everything together, and it would certainly not be a profitmaking venture! But even so, perhaps, someday ---

**NEW DISCOVERY --- Second Known Connecticut 33.35-Z.1 of 1787
from Jeff Rock; Santee, CA (TN-99)**

It is with great pleasure that I announce the discovery of the first collectible specimen of an exceedingly rare Connecticut copper, Miller 33.35-Z.1. After studying the accompanying illustrations this might appear to be an "impossible" coin, with the obverse struck once and the reverse twice! Just a good mystery story, however, since all of the clues needed to unravel this enigma are present.



**33.35-Z.1
1.5x enlargement**

First, look closely at the obverse photograph. What appears to be damage in the center and upper right quadrant of the coin is actually all that remains of the first strike. Upon closer examination, this detail matches the pole arm and ribbon ends used on reverse Z.1. So the first strike, which was about 30% off center, was a brockage strike as well! The resulting coin now appeared as a 30% off center strike, with the obverse an incuse version of the reverse, and the reverse normal but off center.

For some reason -- perhaps a shortage of available planchets -- this piece was again placed between the dies and struck, this time normally centered. The second strike wiped out most of the original brockage strike on the obverse and a good portion of the off center reverse strike. As a double struck off-center brockage, this piece certainly qualifies as a multiple error!

On to the variety itself. This variety was unknown to Miller when he wrote his monograph "The State Coinage of Connecticut," and remained unknown until T.V. Buttrey reported a specimen in the collection of Yale University (CNL, III, No. 1, Page 4), and furnished photographs of both the obverse and reverse of that specimen. The discovery coin is still in the collection of Yale.

The 33.35 obverse die is one of the rarest in the entire 33 series. In writing the EAC '75 catalog Walter Breen stated that "This obverse die is not found in any other combination, and must have fallen apart at once," indicating that he was not then familiar with the Yale discovery. In his description of M.33.35-Z.9, Breen noted that there were two, possibly three examples known of that combination. The addition of two known specimens of M.33.35-Z.1 makes a possible five examples of this obverse die known. The obverse die is an earlier state than the EAC '75: #236 coin, with the cracks lighter in all cases, and is also an earlier state than the coin described by Miller (the A.N.S. example?). Although the photographs of the discovery piece did not reproduce very well, it appears that this coin is also a slightly earlier state than that piece. The combination of M.33.35-Z.1 was therefore struck before M.33.35-Z.9.

The Z.1 reverse is in its earliest state, with no cracks. The Z.1 reverse was paired with six different obverse dies, namely 33.13, 33.19, 33.35, 33.38, 33.40 and 49. The evidence of die cracks point to the following emission sequence --- The reverse was first paired with either obverse 33.13 or 33.35. Both of these combinations are known only in perfect states and it is uncertain at this point which was the original one. With the reverse still uncracked, it was paired with obverse 33.19. Somewhere along the line a small spur-like crack developed from the shield. At a later time a small crack appeared at the fourth cinquefoil and extended across Ms. Liberty's shoulder and later across her breast. The Z.1 reverse was then moved to obverse 33.38, where all of the existing cracks enlarged, the one from the shield now stretching to the border at about five o'clock, but not yet joining the one from the fourth cinquefoil. Apparently, the die was then moved to obverse 49, where a small number of specimens were struck. I have not seen an example of the M.49-Z.1 combination recently enough to determine exactly where it fits into this sequence, but the available evidence that it does have a reverse break from shield to border (CNL III, No. 1, page 4), seems to place it here in the emission sequence. The well-travelled and, presumably, exhausted die was then paired with with obverse 33.40, where, overstressed, it shattered. The crack from the fourth cinquefoil, across the breast, is now connected with the break from the shield to the rim, and another break, from Ms. Liberty's right shoulder to her pole hand. This is the latest known die state of the Z.1 reverse, which can now take its rightful place as one of the most heavily used dies of the entire Connecticut series, along with obverse obverse 33.13 and reverse Z.11, each with six matings.

The coin itself is struck on a slightly-out-of-round planchet, with one obverse lamination and several small lamination-type defects in the center of the reverse. Both sides are slightly granular, most noticeably in the area of second striking on the reverse. The piece weighs 109.5 grains. Die juxtaposition is normal.



NEW MACHIN'S MILLS DIE VARIETY -- Viack 24-72C (TN-100)
from Gary A. Trudgen; Endwell, New York

A new die variety of an imitation British halfpence thought to have been produced at Machin's Mills has been discovered by Richard August of Providence, Rhode Island. Using Robert Viack's attribution system, the die variety is 24-72C. Viack has examined the new variety and supports the conclusion that it is a Machin's Mills product.



24-72C
1.5x enlargement

The obverse die has been ground down, possibly to simulate wear. The delicate wreath and hair design and the mailed bust armor is like that found on Machin imitation halfpence.

The reverse was struck from a heavily rusted reverse die resulting in a weak date element. The branch hand design and small lettering is also like that found on Machin specimens.

There are currently four examples known, and are graded as: G/VG (holed), VG, F/VF and VF. The example pictured has a weight of 118 grains and is 27mm in diameter.

Editor's Comment: Some of our Patron's may believe that this specimen is not properly identified as a product of Machin's Mills. It would be well to remember that the "Machin's Mills" issues, or --- perhaps more correctly identified as the entire class of issues discussed by C. Wyllys Betts in his April 1886 address before the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society on "Counterfeit Half Pence Current in the American Colonies, and their issue from the Mints of Connecticut and Vermont" (See CNL page 747) is the one series of Early American coinages on which, possibly, more basic research remains to be accomplished than all others combined! We believe that it will be quite sometime before all of the Machin's Mills products are recognized and sorted out from those similar specimens that may be from other sources.

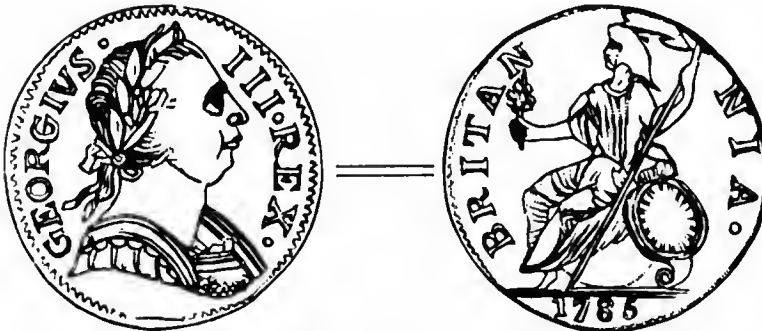
BETTS 4 REAPPEARS**(TN-101)**

from **Mike Ringo; Albany, New York**
& Gary Trudgen; Endwell, New York

A year or so ago CNL Patrons Gary Trudgen and Mike Ringo were looking through a group of unattributed counterfeit halfpence when they noticed on one specimen a peculiar die break just above the head of the obverse figure. Mike thought it looked familiar and might have been illustrated by C. Willis Betts in the printed version of his 1886 address on Counterfeit Half Pence before the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society. Sure enough - it was Betts No. 4 which we had annotated as "Unknown today?" (See The Annotated Betts -- CNL Sequential Page 747 and page BETTS-4). Illustrated below is a 1.5x enlargement of the specimen as well as Bett's line sketch from his address. It took almost 100 years for this one to reappear after Betts identified it in 1886!



No. 4.—Counterfeit Half Penny.



1785.

Apropos of ye Editor's comments on the preceeding page, should this specimen perhaps be designated as a Machin's Mills product? If not, then what?

**Another CONNECTICUT WHAT'SIT ?
from Robert Martin, Bronx, New York**

(TN-73A)

Back in 1978 we illustrated on CNL Sequential Page 622 a retooled Connecticut Copper of 1787 that had been submitted by Harold Hauser of Glen Ridge, New Jersey. Here, today, is another. This one is a 1786 specimen which, when compared with the first, appears without question to have been produced by the same individual.



1.5x

**And -- A NEW JERSEY WHAT'SIT ?
from the CNL Photofiles.**

(TN-102)

The late Richard Picker once commented to ye Editor that "the skill with which those engravers could move metal around on the surface of a coin was just incredible!" This was in response to the retooled Connecticut mentioned above that had been illustrated on CNL Sequential Page 622 -- and to illustrate his point he sent along a NEW JERSEY WHAT'SIT ? for us to photograph and file for future use.



1.5x

Dick was almost positive that he had correctly identified the original New Jersey die variety as Maris 6-D. If our readers reach the same conclusion as Dick, they will recognize just HOW INCREDIBLE this retooling job really is. All our New Jersey specialists should have a field day with this one!